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# The assassination probe

The time has come to rethink the U.S. House of Representatives' investigation into the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King.

The U.S. House of Representatives committee handling the investigation, and the committee's chief investigator, Richard Sprague, a former prosecutor in Philadelphia, have created such a tempest that we now doubt their inquiry can ever do its job.

That job is to make not only an authoritative investigation into the assassinations, but also to publish findings in such an unimpeachable manner that they will be accepted and believed by the public. No doubt there will be some skeptics who will mistrust any findings that do not agree with their own particular conspiratorial theories. But millions of Americans would likely be willing to accept the findings of a thorough, professional, and clearly impartial panel.

Reluctantly we conclude that neither the present U.S. House committee nor Mr. Sprague any longer meets these qualifications. Their public standing, their credibility have been frittered away. What's more, their flamboyant approach and the undignified atmosphere they have created do disservice to the memory of President Kennedy and Dr. King.

This is too bad. There is a need for a final, authoritative investigation, not so much into the slaying of President Kennedy as into the murder of Dr. King. While it is unlikely that all doubts can ever be erased the entire nation would benefit if some of the remaining questions are answered.

At this late date it may be that the best vehicle for such an inquiry is a new joint House-Senate committee, established solely and exclusively for this purpose.

Or perhaps President Carter should appoint a new review panel, one composed of members from outside government, members with absolutely no stake in previous investigations and with credentials that are above reproach.

Whatever approach is used, it is now clear the American people deserve a better investigative effort than the current one.